

Message Text

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ORIGIN AF-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 HA-05 AID-05 SS-15 SP-02 L-03 H-01
NSC-05 PA-01 ICA-11 CIAE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 OMB-01
EB-08 TRSE-00 /078 R

DRAFTED BY AF/I:LGSHURTLEFF:PCS
APPROVED BY AF/I:WHLEWIS
AF/C:RMARCUS
HA/HR:RMAXIM
AID/AFR:EDONOGHUE

-----030580 231829Z /53

P 231724Z JUN 78
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY YAOUNDE PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 160354

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: EAID, SHUM, CM, US

SUBJECT: HUMAN RIGHTS AND FOREIGN ASSISTANCE: CAMEROON

REF: MARCUS-SMYTH TELCONS JUNE 16 AND 23

SUMMARY AND ACTION REQUESTED: IN ORDER TO MEET REQUIREMENT
FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ON CAMEROON HUMAN RIGHTS SITU-
TION AND TO PREPARE FOR REQUIRED JANUARY 1979 HUMAN RIGHTS
REPORT TO CONGRESS, DEPARTMENT WILL NEED ADDITIONAL REPORT-
ING FOCUSSED PARTICULARLY ON STATUS OF ANY POLITICAL
PRISONERS CAMEROON MAY BE HOLDING, PRISON CONDITIONS
AND LEGAL/JUDICIAL SAFEGUARDS.

1. IN ADDITION TO CAMEROON APPEARING ON LIST OF COUNTRIES
NOTED IN HOUSE FOREIGN OPERATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE REPORT
(EXCERPTS POUCHED) AS HAVING HUMAN RIGHTS PROBLEMS,
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QUESTION OF POLITICAL DETAINEES IN CAMEROON WAS ALSO RAISED
AT LATEST INTERAGENCY STAFF MEETING ON HUMAN RIGHTS AND
FOREIGN ASSISTANCE. STAFF GROUP AGREED THAT IMPLEMENTA-
TION OF PENDING FY-79 BILATERAL ASSISTANCE PROJECTS
SHOULD NOT BE HELD UP ON HUMAN RIGHTS GROUNDS, BUT ASKED
FOR MORE INFORMATION ON HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION--PARTICULAR-
LY WITH REGARD TO ANY REMAINING POLITICAL PRISONERS.

2. DEPARTMENT IS CHECKING WITH AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL (AI) TO ASCERTAIN IF THEY CONTINUE TO FOLLOW STATUS OF ANY "PRISONERS OF CONSCIENCE" IN CAMEROON. WE SUSPECT THAT RENEWED INTEREST IN HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION THERE MAY PARTIALLY BE RESULT OF GURC RELUCTANCE TO RESPOND TO AI INQUIRIES.

3. IN ORDER TO GET THE RECORD STRAIGHT, WOULD APPRECIATE EARLY EMBASSY REVIEW OF OBJECTIVE HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION IN CAMEROON WITH PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO POLITICAL DETAINEES OR PRISONERS THAT MAY STILL BE IN CUSTODY, PRISON CONDITIONS AND LEGAL AND JUDICIAL SAFEGUARDS AVAILABLE. WE WOULD ALSO APPRECIATE EMBASSY CONFIRMATION OF RELEASE OF PERSONS DETAINED IN 1976 FOR DISTRIBUTION ANTI-GOVERNMENT TRACTS, AND INFORMATION ON ANY REMAINING UPC DETAINEES. VANCE

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: HUMAN RIGHTS, FOREIGN ASSISTANCE
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 23 jun 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978STATE160354
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: LGSHURTLEFF:PCS
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780262-0901
Format: TEL
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780625/aaaaavdw.tel
Line Count: 79
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 996ea182-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ORIGIN AF
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 04 aug 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2223951
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: HUMAN RIGHTS AND FOREIGN ASSISTANCE: CAMEROON
TAGS: EAID, SHUM, CM, US
To: YAOUNDE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/996ea182-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014